

2016 Registration Review Report College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba



OFFICE OF THE MANITOBA FAIRNESS COMMISSIONER

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Executive Summary

The Office of the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner (OMFC) 2016 Registration Review Report examines the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba (CRNM) state of progress with regard to the fair consideration of internationally educated nurses (IENs).

CRNM is committed to fair registration practice and its licensure process for IENs has undergone significant evolution over the past several years. Dedicated IEN assessments are in place and allow for a strong assessment of qualification. The Bridging Program for Internationally Educated Nurses (BPIEN Program) provides IEN gap training and a key pathway to licensure.

There have been significant challenges in the IEN licensure process with assessment delays as well as limited spots in the BPIEN Program. Many IENs apply and are assessed in both the RN and LPN professions and there is limited co-ordination between these professions in the province. Extended licensure timelines have resulted in repeated language testing for IENs.

Identifying a leadership role for CRNM in a multi-stakeholder environment, the Fairness Commissioner sees a need for additional ways for IENs to receive professional orientation and address gaps after assessment, reducing duplication for IENs applying between the RN and LPN professions, improved options for delivery of the BPIEN Program, research into communication issues in the workplace and improving appeal information. Continued work on registration data collection and analysis between CRNM and the OMFC would also be helpful.

In response to the progress opportunities identified by the Fairness Commissioner, CRNM has committed to working with stakeholders to:

- Encourage workplace orientation for IENs post-registration, particularly for those who may have registered without undergoing the BPIEN Program
- Improve delivery of the BPIEN Program, including delivery outside of Winnipeg
- Move to a more efficient structure for the Clinical Competence Assessment
- Determine whether further opportunities exist to share information to reduce duplications for IEN applicants seeking licensure in the LPN profession
- Review IEN registration data to provide context and where possible improve process efficiencies
- Ensure research on IEN communication issues and language proficiency policies is current
- Determine appeal mechanism at relevant points in the registration process

The Fairness Commissioner sees CRNM's Action Plan as constructive and a step in the right direction.

Introduction

Registration reviews are conducted as part of the Fairness Commissioner's mandate to review the registration practices of regulatory bodies subject to *The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act* (Act).

The purpose of a registration review is to enable the Fairness Commissioner to determine a regulator's compliance to the Act and to make recommendations for improvement. Compliance to the legislation refers both to the fairness of assessment and registration practice, with particular attention to the fair consideration of internationally educated applicants, as well as the co-operation of the regulator with the Fairness Commissioner.

The Act stipulates that registration reviews are to be undertaken at times specified by the Fairness Commissioner. It also stipulates that the content of a registration review is to include an analysis of the relevance and necessity of registration requirements, the timeliness of decision-making, the reasonableness of fees and the registration of internationally educated individuals. This may involve the review of any third parties employed in the assessment and registration process.

The 2016 Registration Review focuses on a few critical issues the Fairness Commissioner has identified as key for Manitoba regulators to make progress; the need for timely registration, the recognition of professional work experience and supervised practice opportunities.

In this report, the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba's (CRNM) assessment and registration practice is evaluated in terms of its overall state of fair practice and for the purpose of identifying progress opportunities. This includes an analysis of CRNM's activities regarding the critical areas of timely registration, the recognition of professional work experience and supervised practice opportunities.

This report is a public document and will be posted on the OMFC's website, submitted to the Minister of Education and Training and the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living.

Context of the Profession in Manitoba

Registered nurses (RNs) represent one of the most highly educated professional groups. They are self-regulated health professionals who are accountable to the Standards of Practice and nursing values outlined in the Code of Ethics.

RNs work autonomously and in collaboration with others in a variety of practice roles. They practise as clinicians, counselors, patient care advocates, researchers, teachers, policy makers, administrators and more. This practice is supported through entry-level baccalaureate education programs that focus on the humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, leadership, health teaching and research and are guided by a professional code of ethics. It is from these broad areas of study that RNs base their practice.

Nursing interventions are evidence-based and supported by practice knowledge in these different areas. The broad and deep educational background of RNs means that they are able to work with individuals, families, groups, communities and populations in urban, rural and remote areas. Within these areas, RNs can be found working with people of all ages who have diverse social, physiological, emotional and mental health needs. RNs practice in an inter-professional, collaborative environment with a patient/client/family-centered approach meaning that they work together with the patient/client and family to achieve a realistic plan of care.

The Canadian model of nursing practice differs from that in many areas in the world with its emphasis on independent practice and clinical judgement. Given the differences in practice internationally, the level of expertise required and the public safety issues involved, a rigorous assessment of qualifications and the provision of professional orientation is needed for internationally educated nurses (IENs).

The profession in Manitoba took a significant step forward in 2009 with the introduction of a Clinical Competence Assessment (CCA), complemented by an integrated bridge training program for IENs. In 2014, the National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS) was created to evaluate IEN academic qualifications against nationally harmonized standards in Canada's nursing professions.

CRNM is currently preparing to transition from *The Registered Nurses Act* to *The Regulated Health Professions Act* and is working with Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living to develop its regulations.

The system of IEN licensure that has evolved in Manitoba has become both more sophisticated and complex. Multiple stakeholders and funders are involved: different provincial departments are responsible for the reimbursement of CCA fees and funding for the bridge training program; different post-secondary institutions deliver the assessment and bridging program; the National Nursing Assessment Service credential evaluation and the final NCLEX RN exam are delivered by different third parties chosen by provincial regulators across the country.

Although CRNM is ultimately responsible and has the distinct role of recognizing and granting authority for all of the pieces of the system, the complexities posed by numerous stakeholders make systemic change a challenge.

With almost 14,000 licensed RNs in Manitoba, registered nursing is the largest regulated health profession in the province. Over the last several years and especially outside of Winnipeg, demand for practitioners in Manitoba has remained high. According to the Manitoba Nursing Labour Market Supply Report 2015 <<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/nurses/docs/mnlms15.pdf>> the province has 1,668 RN position vacancies (496 in the South, 115 in the North and 1,057 in Winnipeg).

Overview of Assessment and Registration Process

The College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba (CRNM) currently operates under the authority of *The Registered Nurses Act* (C.C.S.M. c. R40), the Registered Nurses Regulation (Regulation 128/2001) and the Extended Practice Regulation (Regulation 43/2005). In Manitoba, all nurses practising and using the registered nurse, extended practice nurse (Nurse Practitioner) or graduate nurse designation must be registered with CRNM.

Qualification

There are two principal qualifications needed in order to be eligible for registration as a registered nurse: graduation from an approved nursing program and passing the NCLEX RN nursing exam, the approved RN entry-to-practice exam.

For internationally educated nurses (IENs), a nursing program substantively equivalent to an approved program is required. IENs are also required to undertake a Clinical Competence Assessment and depending on the results, may be required to complete additional education and training through the Bridging Program for Internationally Educated Nurses (BPIEN Program). Assessment and training through select out-of-province competence assessments and bridging programs is also now a possibility.

Application and Assessment Process

Step 1: Apply to National Nursing Assessment Service

For IEN applicants, the first step in the application process involves opening a file with the National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS) to acquire an Advisory Report. This involves submitting required documents – education, previous licensure, professional work history, language proficiency – and paying a \$650 USD application fee¹.

Upon completed application to NNAS, applicants receive an Advisory Report in eight to 12 weeks.

Step 2: Apply to College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba

Applying to CRNM involves completing an application form, paying a \$525 CAD application fee, submitting required documents – identification, immigration status, criminal record checks – and arranging for NNAS to submit the applicant's Advisory Report to CRNM.

Within a week or two upon completed application, CRNM will provide the applicant an initial assessment decision determining the applicant's eligibility to proceed to the Clinical Competence Assessment (CCA).

¹ All fees noted in this report are current as of December 2016

Step 3: Undertake Clinical Competence Assessment

The Clinical Competence Assessment (CCA) is a three to five day evaluation conducted at the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Manitoba. The CCA involves a variety of testing formats: self-assessment, written tests, clinical judgement and triple-jump scenario assessment, as well as an objective structured clinical exam (OSCE).

Upon referral from CRNM, the time to secure a CCA testing date varies depending upon demand. As of September 2016, it can be arranged within a few weeks. Applicants are informed of their CCA results in six to eight weeks.

There is a \$2,200 fee for the CCA. Applicants may be eligible for reimbursement of the cost through Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living.

Step 4: If necessary, Bridge Education

If applicants successfully demonstrate competence on the CCA, they are eligible to write the NCLEX RN exam and apply for Graduate Nurse Registration.

If gaps in skills or knowledge are found, a course of study prescribed by the CRNM must be completed. This usually requires fulfilling six to 24 weeks of academic and practicum work through Red River College's Bridging Program for Internationally Educated Nurses (BPIEN Program).

Tuition cost and partial support for books and supplies (about \$3,000) for the BPIEN Program may be covered for eligible applicants by Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living in exchange for the completion of a return of service agreement. Within six months of completing the BPIEN Program, Manitoba Health requires employment as an RN secured for the return of service, for 12 consecutive months in a position of no less than 0.6 EFT. There is roughly \$1,000 worth of additional, associated costs that need to be covered by the applicant. Wait times to enter the program vary, but as of September 2016, it is about 18 months.

If the applicant has gaps too significant to be addressed by the BPIEN Program, applicants will need to complete an approved nursing program to pursue licensure.

Step 5: Nursing Exam

For applicants successful on the CCA and for applicants who complete bridge education, the next step is to apply to write the National Council Licensure Exam – Registered Nurse (NCLEX RN).

The NCLEX RN exam is available in several jurisdictions internationally for nurses who wish to apply for registration in the U.S. and Canada, so it may be possible for an IEN applicant to have already completed the exam upon initial application to CRNM.

The NCLEX RN is a multiple-choice, computerized-adaptive exam that tests for the application of foundational and entry-level nursing knowledge. The NCLEX RN exam costs \$360 to write and CRNM requires an application processing fee of \$157.50.

Once the applicant is scheduled to write the NCLEX RN, Graduate Nurse Registration is an option and costs \$304.99 for CRNM's registration and processing fee. The Graduate Nurse designation allows individuals to work under supervision for up to four months. Three attempts to write the NCLEX RN exam are permitted, although Graduate Nurse Registration is revoked and remedial course work is required upon a second failure. CRNM has made a request to Manitoba Health for an amendment to RN Regulation that would allow unlimited writings within three years of graduating an RN education program and remove the requirement for remedial coursework.

Step 6: RN Registration

Upon passing the NCLEX RN exam, the final step is to apply for Registered Nurse licensure with CRNM. A pro-rated, annual fee of \$442.49 is required.

Time and Cost

Depending on the circumstances of the applicant, the range of time and cost to register with the CRNM varies markedly.

Upon completed application, for an IEN applicant who does not need gap training or English or French language testing or upgrading, the entire registration process, including the NNAS Advisory Report, a CCA assessment, and the NCLEX RN Exam, may take less than eight months and will cost roughly \$2,300 (NNAS fee, CRNM application fee, NCLEX RN exam fee, CRNM registration fee and factoring the \$2,200 reimbursement for eligible applicants for the CCA fee) plus associated documentation costs.

The majority of IENs do require bridge training before licensure and will face a longer, costlier process. For this group, time to registration will take roughly two years (wait times to enter BPIEN Program are a significant variable) and cost approximately \$3,300 (NNAS fee, CRNM application fee, and factoring the \$2,200 reimbursement for eligible applicants for the CCA fee, associated BPIEN bridging costs, NCLEX RN exam fee, and CRNM registration fee).

Applicants may require language testing and some may need English or French language upgrading, which will add several hundred dollars and can take time to arrange testing and improve proficiency.

Government funding support for eligible applicants for the Clinical Competence Assessment and for Red River College's Bridging Program helps keep costs down.

CRNM's registration data for IENs in the 2011-2015 period indicates the average time to registration from date all documents received was 637 days or just over 21 months.

State of Progress

The College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba is committed to the fair assessment and recognition of internationally educated nurses.

Many aspects of CRNM's registration practice for internationally educated nurses are progressive and CRNM has taken steps further improving its practice since the 2012 registration review.

Subsequent to the 2012 review, CRNM has improved its registration information for IENs, including an application handbook and an audio presentation. A formal appeal and pre-appeal process has been implemented.

Qualification standards and entry-level competencies are well defined and periodically reviewed. Psychometrically well-vetted credential assessment, exam and competency assessment are employed. Two approved language tests are recognized, the occupation-specific CELBAN language test and the IELTS academic version language test. A bridge education program integrated with a competency assessment is available in Manitoba.

CRNM's assessment and registration process is effective in that those who are licensed are well-qualified. Licensed IENs have successfully undergone an assessment of academic qualifications, work experience, competency demonstration, knowledge test, and in most cases, dedicated bridge training.

Over the last two years, CRNM's registration process for IENs has undergone several significant changes offering potential and actual improvements:

- The National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS) – Since August 2014, NNAS is the first-step, national application body for the nursing professions in Canada. For licensed practical, registered psychiatric and registered nurses, the NNAS verifies IEN documents and credentials, evaluates IEN academic qualifications for comparability to Canadian education standards and provides a secure, centralized electronic repository for credentials and registration documents.

NNAS provides a more informed, meaningful assessment of academic programs than was previously available.

- The U.S. based, National Council Licensure Exam for Registered Nurses (NCLEX RN) – As of January 2015, the NCLEX RN exam replaced the Canadian Registered Nursing Exam as the accepted written examination for CRNM and other provincial RN nursing regulators across the country.

The NCLEX RN exam features computerized-adaptive testing to improve validity. It can be written throughout the year and is offered in some locations internationally. No-fee, test preparation is available. As the exam is used in several jurisdictions internationally, IENs may apply already having completed the exam and so need one less step to complete the licensure process.

- Since early 2016, a revised Clinical Competence Assessment is now delivered by the University of Manitoba’s Rady Faculty of Health Sciences. Formerly the assessment was offered at the Health Sciences Centre.

The revised CCA has increased capacity and assessment times, resulting in much shorter wait times and better accessibility for the assessment.

Challenges

Transition to the NNAS and to the new service provider for the CCA assessment caused delays. In its first year of operation, NNAS Advisory Reports took an average of five months to be completed.

The CCA was not available in Manitoba from the spring of 2015 to early 2016. To be assessed in this period, applicants had to travel out-of-province. For eligible applicants, reimbursement of the CCA fee was provided by Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living.

Over the last several years a large number of IENs have become stalled in the licensure process. Many had long waits and some continue to wait for a NNAS advisory report, or a CCA assessment, or a seat in the BPIEN Program.

In large part, the root of the problem lies in the capacity limitations of the CCA/BPIEN licensure pathway. CRNM deemed an average of 100 IENs annually as eligible to write CCAs in the 2011-2015 period. Roughly two thirds of this group undertook a CCA and the number of IENs requiring the BPIEN Program exceeded its 40 seat annual capacity. Neither the CCA nor the BPIEN Program could keep up with demand and waitlists developed.

Some of CRNM’s assessment and documentation policies further impact delays. Unlike some Canadian jurisdictions, CRNM requires a CCA for all IEN applicants, even those deemed by NNAS to have academic qualification comparable to Canadian standards and who have passed the NCLEX RN exam. Moreover, many caught in an extended licensure process are required to repeatedly submit costly, difficult-to-arrange documents. Language proficiency policies and repeated language testing often add to delays.

Moving Forward

Currently a number of factors point to some improvement in this situation:

- Timelines to receive an Advisory Report from the NNAS are improving.
- Wait times for the new CCA have been eliminated and now assessments are possible within a few weeks of CRNM’s application assessment. CRNM continues to work on improving the CCA, including looking at implementing a tiered structure and providing more detailed assessment results.

- Red River College is now piloting delivery of some elements of the BPIEN Program in regions outside of Winnipeg as part of a health workforce planning/employer based initiative.
- In Manitoba, IENs who have completed out-of-province assessment and bridge education have the results recognized by CRNM.

Further measures for consideration and which may involve work with key stakeholders, include:

- Additional gap training strategies where IENs can meet gaps and be provided integration and orientation support in the field.
- Developing the capacity for IENs enrolled in out-of-province bridge training to complete practicum components in Manitoba.
- Improvements in the delivery and capacity of Red River College's BPIEN Program. The recent move to offer elements of the program in rural regions is a step forward. Further improvements could include opening up part time seats, providing online distance access and using curriculum to support workplace orientation and gap training.
- Many IENs initially apply to CRNM, are assessed, and then go on to seek registration as a licensed practical nurse with the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba. Assessment and bridge training capacity issues are problematic in this profession as well. As it is currently functioning, it is not uncommon for IENs to undergo CCA assessments in both professions and some even go on to bridge training in both – first as an LPN then as an RN. Better coordination between the assessment of IENs in the LPN and RN professions is needed. This would better utilize resources, help maximize assessment capacity and better support matching IEN skill sets to the right nursing profession.

In Conclusion

Manitoba faces a serious challenge ensuring timely, effective licensure for IENs. Many IENs are currently out-of-practice and stalled in the licensure process. Time out-of-practice de-skills people and some in this group will need complete re-training to pursue a nursing career. For others, the clock is working against re-entry into the profession without expeditious remedial training. To do a better job with these challenges moving forward, additional gap training pathways and better coordination between the assessment of IENs in the LPN and RN professions to ensure appropriate capacity and timely licensure opportunities is needed. This is a difficult challenge that will require coordination among the various stakeholders involved and strong leadership from CRNM.

Fair Practice Analysis

The Fairness Commissioner has identified the need for timely and effective registration, the recognition of qualifications acquired in professional work experience and the need for supervised practice opportunities as key substantive issues critical to realize progress among Manitoba regulators.

Following the Manitoba Fairness Standard, the Fairness Commissioner has the following commendations, comments and concerns about CRNM's state of progress concerning these key fairness issues:

Timely Registration

The assessment and registration process is structured efficiently (Manitoba Fairness Standard, 7.1).

CRNM's licensure process is for the most part structured efficiently. Applicants start with the NNAS assessment followed by CRNM application, CCA assessment, BPIEN program if needed, and then NCLEX RN exam. However, there are opportunities for improvement:

- a) A more effective use and positioning of the Clinical Competence Assessment would improve efficiency. The CCA could be waived for IENs with academic training deemed substantively equivalent to Canadian standards and who have already passed the NCLEX RN exam at time of application. Bridge or gap training could be allowed in lieu of undergoing a competency assessment, or perhaps only some portions of the assessment would need to be undertaken.
- b) Additional, workplace-based licensure pathways to meet qualification gaps and receive professional orientation would offer IENs a timely alternative to the BPIEN program.
- c) A more coordinated intake and assessment approach for the RN and LPN professions in Manitoba would help IENs avoid pursuing licensure in two professions and help maximize assessment resources.

The OMFC recognizes CRNM is responsible only for RN licensure, not the LPN profession. However, CRNM can play a key role moving to a coordinated approach. This will require working collaboratively with stakeholders to allow for and support a coordinated intake and assessment. For example, this could include establishing effective protocols with the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba to share application and assessment documents.

The assessment and registration process is periodically reviewed to ensure timeliness for internationally educated applicants (Manitoba Fairness Standard, 7.2).

Periodic review of standards, exams and assessments is one of CRNM's strengths. CRNM was active in the development of NNAS policies and procedures and further review of the service is planned as the NNAS transitions

out of its pilot stage. CRNM audited the former CCA at the Health Sciences Centre and has been actively involved in the development of the new CCA at the University of Manitoba.

Communication with applicants is timely and systematic (Manitoba Fairness Standard, 7.3).

NNAS provides a helpful online application portal that allows applicants to see the current status of their applications, including any outstanding documents from third parties.

The Fairness Commissioner raised a concern about the need for better communication with applicants in CRNM's 2012 registration review. IENs in an extended licensure process often needed to resubmit expired documents, only to realize after expiration that new documents needed to be arranged.

CRNM's has introduced better information on its website and in its audio presentation that draws attention for applicants to be aware of the need for current documents. Proactive communication is also provided for applicants with documents with upcoming expiration dates and assessment deadlines.

The registration process is such that qualified internationally educated applicants have an opportunity to practice in some capacity within a year of application (Manitoba Fairness Standard, 7.4).

Licensure within a year is possible for IENs who successfully complete the CCA and are deemed eligible for graduate registration.

Forty-three IEN applicants in the 2011-2015 period successfully completed the CCA.

Recognition of Professional Work Experience

Professional work experience is considered to determine qualification (Manitoba Fairness Standard, 5.10).

CRNM assess professional work experience for the purpose of determining eligibility for a CCA. This includes the possibility of supplementing the assessment of academic qualification with regard to the 1,450 clinical hour requirement of their academic standard. If the applicant's academic program does not meet the 1,450 hour criterion, their professional work experience will be assessed to determine if the clinical experience in question is satisfied. This is progressive practice.

Professional work experience is not assessed for the purpose of waiving or reducing elements of the CCA. For IENs with strong professional experience in health care environments similar to Canadian practice, consideration should be given to waiving the competency assessment in whole or in part.

The CCA itself provides IENs the ability to demonstrated qualifications and skills acquired through professional work experience. This is progressive practice.

Regulator has objective standards and criteria to assess knowledge and competencies acquired through work experience (Manitoba Fairness Standard, 5.11).

CRNM has professional work experience standards and criteria in place for the purpose of determining eligibility for the CCA and to supplement a consideration of an applicant's academic qualification. Objective standards and criteria are also in place to assess an applicant's CCA performance.

If Canadian work experience is a mandatory requirement, it is clearly justified (Manitoba Fairness Standard, 5.12).

CRNM does not have a mandatory work experience requirement.

Supervised Practice Opportunities

Supervised practice opportunities are available for the purpose of assessment and gap training (Manitoba Fairness Standard, 5.13).

CRNM's Graduate Nurse Registration allows applicants to work with practice restrictions until they successfully write the NCLEX RN exam. Graduate registration is progressive as it supports timely entry to practice.

Given the public safety concerns in the nursing profession and the diversity of professional practice abroad, a period of supervised practice to provide IENs professional orientation and integration support needs consideration. Exposure to Canadian practice under supervision promotes safe practice. If supervised practice occurred prior to the CCA, higher pass rates and a reduced need for bridge training would be expected.

Regional health authorities and employers have expressed interest in supporting a workplace-based orientation and some gap training for IENs.

Additional Fairness Concerns

The Fairness Commissioner also identifies several application, assessment and documentation policies of concern:

Difficult-to-provide documents are warranted (Manitoba Fairness Standard, 4.1).

According to CRNM policy, regulatory history documentation is valid for one year. Extended licensure timelines means that many IENs are required to repeatedly arrange for the third party re-submission of regulatory history documentation. For those applicants that can provide evidence of living, working or studying in Manitoba subsequent to the documentation, they should not be required to provide it again.

English and French language proficiency policies are fair (Manitoba Fairness Standard, Element 6).

The Fairness Commissioner has had a concern with CRNM's language proficiency policies since 2011. Over the last several years, CRNM's language proficiency policies have become more restrictive. Applicants are required to meet higher levels of proficiency, more applicants need to meet the language proficiency requirement and more are required to undergo repeated testing.

The OMFC understands these policy changes are both a response for a need to nationally harmonize language proficiency requirements and to the communication challenges CRNM is seeing among IENs in practice. However, it is not clear that more stringent language proficiency policies are a solution to these concerns. A better understanding of the communication challenges in the field together with improved IEN training about the role and communicative responsibilities of nurses is likely a more effective solution.

With the introduction of the NNAS in August 2014, all applicants are required to supply language proficiency test results with exemptions in place only for first language applicants whose primary language, where they live and studied, is English or French, or where they have practiced safely in an English or French environment within the last two years. Moreover, language test results need to be dated within six months of application to NNAS. This means applicants in possession of valid language tests results, may have to take another language test prior to application even though they have already met the language requirement.

Required Qualifications are relevant and necessary for competent professional practice (Manitoba Fairness Standard, Element 3).

Since 2012, the Fairness Commissioner has recommended that CRNM remove its previous registration requirement for recent graduates. This requirement can pose a barrier for recent nursing graduates who immigrate without having registered in their home jurisdiction.

CRNM maintains the requirement is relevant and that its benefits outweigh the difficulties it may occasionally pose for recent graduates.

Assessment and registration process is relationally fair (Manitoba Fairness Standard, Element 12).

IENs applicants to CRNM represent the largest group of internationally educated professionals contacting the OMFC raising concerns about their treatment. These reports are anecdotal, but numerous and consistent. We note the number of IENs contacting the OMFC has dropped significantly over the last two years.

The Fairness Commissioner raised this issue in the 2012 review and more recently in her 2013-2014 report *On Progress in Fair Registration Practices*. Subsequently, following discussions with CRNM, OMFC has agreed to discuss these concerns with CRNM as they arise.

OMFC understands that CRNM has implemented an appeal/pre-appeal process and that appeal information is provided in assessment result letters to improve relational fairness.

Legal exceptions notwithstanding, applicants have access to records that relate to their application for registration (Manitoba Fairness Standard, Element 11).

IENs receive a truncated version of their Advisory Report that compares their academic qualifications for comparability to Canadian standards. A more technical report is sent to the regulatory body. It is not clear if information is provided to applicants by NNAS regarding the differences between the report they receive and the report the regulator receives. Nor is it clear how the assessment results as they pertain to these further details are disclosed to applicants.

OMFC understands CRNM shares NNAS's concern that disclosing full Advisory Reports may compromise the integrity of the assessment.

Applicants have a right to access their records and need to be informed about how to access their full Advisory Report. They should have access to the complete details concerning how their academic qualifications have been assessed against the Canadian standard.

Progress Opportunities

The Fairness Commissioner sees the following opportunities for progress regarding the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba's assessment and registration practice for IENs:

1. A leadership role for CRNM ensuring the development of additional ways for IENs to receive professional orientation and address gaps after CRNM assessment.
2. Co-operating and collaborating with stakeholders and partners to improve the IEN licensure process, including:
 - Work with NNAS to provide complete assessment details
 - Work with the University of Manitoba CCA to explore tiered assessment and to provide assessment details
 - Work with Red River College's BPIEN Program to improve the delivery model
 - Work with CLPNM to reduce inefficiencies and duplications for IENs in the RN and LPN licensure pathways
3. Research into communication issues in the workplace to ensure the right language proficiency policies and supports are in place.
4. Ensuring applicants with issues or concerns with assessment decisions:
 - Have opportunity to discuss decisions, be heard and learn about the rationale for policies and decisions
 - Are provided complete appeal and pre-appeal information, including the review process, timelines and fees
5. Works towards developing a robust and comprehensive database of registration process and outcomes to better inform actions.

Fairness Commissioner's Recommendation

To ensure compliance to The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act, the Fairness Commissioner recommends that the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba take action regarding these progress opportunities.

College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba's Action Plan

In response to the Fairness Commissioner's recommendation, CRNM proposed the following Action Plan as of November 2016.

Progress Opportunity	Action(s)	Completion Date
<p>1. A leadership role for CRNM ensuring the development of additional ways for IENs to receive professional orientation and address gaps after CRNM assessment.</p>	<p>With regard to professional orientation in the workplace, the College will work with the regional health authorities to encourage them to have some degree of professional orientation in place for IENs. It is important to note that the College does not have jurisdiction over the regions in this regard.</p> <p>Gap remediation after a clinical competence assessment must take place through an education program that is approved by the College. The College is currently working with Manitoba Health and a variety of stakeholders to ensure that the Bridging Program for Internationally-Educated Nurses (BPIEN) at Red River College uses its capacity in the most efficient way possible. As well, we are looking for more opportunities to offer the BPIEN outside the City of Winnipeg.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>2. Co-operating and collaborating with stakeholders and partners to improve the IEN licensure process, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with NNAS to provide complete assessment details • Work with the University of Manitoba CCA to explore tiered assessment and to provide assessment details • Work with Red River College's BPIEN to 	<p>The College is committed to working with NNAS and stakeholders to provide IENs with the relevant details around their assessment.</p> <p>A more efficient assessment is a very high priority for the College. We continue to work with a psychometrician to collect and analyse data from the current CCA so that it can be re-organized into a better structure.</p> <p>We continue to work with Manitoba Health, Red River College and other stakeholders to find ways to improve and expand the current BPIEN delivery model.</p> <p>While we maintain that Licensed Practical Nurses and Registered Nurses are two distinct professions with distinct scopes of practice, we will work with CLPNM to</p>	<p>December 2017</p> <p>December 2018</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Progress Opportunity	Action(s)	Completion Date
<p>improve delivery model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with CLPNM to reduce inefficiencies and duplications for IENs in the RN and LPN licensure pathways 	<p>determine whether opportunities exist for information sharing which would reduce duplication in the licensure pathways.</p>	
<p>3. Research into communication issues in the workplace to ensure the right language proficiency policies and supports are in place.</p>	<p>It is important to note that the College sets its language proficiency requirements in the context of a national working group that is informed by independent experts in the field of language proficiency assessment. All three nursing regulators (registered nurses, registered psychiatric nurses and licensed practical nurses) have adopted the same requirements. The College will work with its counterparts to ensure that the research informing this work is current.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>4. Ensuring applicants with issues or concerns with assessment decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have opportunity to discuss decisions, be heard and learn about the rationale for policies and decisions • Are provided complete appeal and pre-appeal information, including the review process, timelines and fees 	<p>As set out in The Registered Nurses Act, applicants may appeal an application that has not been approved by the Executive Director to the CRNM Board of Directors.</p> <p>Applicants are advised that, if they have questions about their assessment, they are welcome to make an appointment with registration staff to review the details of their assessment.</p> <p>We are working with legal counsel to determine an appropriate appeal mechanism at relevant points in the registration process.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>December 2017</p>
<p>5. Work towards developing a robust and comprehensive database of registration process and outcomes to better inform actions.</p>	<p>The College and OMFC have agreed to review the 2011-2015 CRNM data submissions with the goals of providing context around the length of time it takes applicants to achieve registration with the College and finding process efficiencies, where possible.</p>	<p>December 2017</p>

Action Plan Comments

CRNM'S Comments

The College's mandate is to protect the public from unsafe, unethical and incompetent registered nursing practice. Our standards and requirements are set to allow us to achieve this to the extent possible.

The College is committed to ensuring that its registration requirements are transparent, objective, fair and impartial. Registered nursing practice in Manitoba is autonomous and accountable, and RNs must be able to practise safely in this environment.

All applicants for registration must meet the eligibility requirements stipulated in the Registered Nurses Act and Regulations. Accordingly, internationally educated nurses are assessed in terms of their nursing education programs' equivalency to those in Canada, and their demonstration of their acquired nursing knowledge, skill and judgment through a clinical competence assessment. Most identified gaps can be remediated through a bridging program. We believe this is a fair and reasonable method of assessment.

CRNM's Action Plan will form the basis of its relationship with the OMFC moving forward. Follow-up meetings will be held annually after the 2016 Registration Review to discuss implementation of activities and updates to the Action Plan. Action plan updates will be posted on the OMFC's website on an annual basis, following these meetings allowing any interested party to see the progress to date.

Statement of Compliance

The College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba's Action Plan is a constructive response to the progress opportunities identified in this review. These actions will improve fair practice for the assessment and registration of internationally educated nurses (IENs) and are consistent with the intent of *The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act*.

The stakes are high for Manitoba to realize an effective and timely licensure process for IENs. Access to RN practitioners is critical for the quality of care Manitoba's health system provides. Large numbers of IENs immigrate to Manitoba annually and the need for RNs remains high.

I recognize the challenges posed by the multi-stakeholder complexity surrounding the critical issues raised in this report and the importance of the role of many to make progress in this context.

I am encouraged to see CRNM taking on a leadership role through a variety of commitments working with various parties to improve the system. I am confident these actions will make a positive difference and look forward to our future engagement.



Ximena Munoz
Manitoba Fairness Commissioner

Appendix I: 2016 Registration Review Process

The OMFC's 2016 review process has several key steps: meeting to discuss the focus and process of the review, agreeing to a review schedule, documenting, evaluating and preparing a progress report, and achieving an action plan to move things forward. The process is designed to support regulators to further evolve registration practice and realize progressive change.

Activity	Description	Date
Registration Review Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group meeting between OMFC and regulators Latest data and research presented Fairness Standard, review focus and process presented Review schedule provided 	June 10, 2016
Progress Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRNM report on its fair practice progress Includes analysis of timely registration, recognition of professional work experience and supervised practice opportunities Progress opportunities identified Recommendation from Fairness Commissioner to address progress opportunities 	September 19, 2016
Progress Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRNM and OMFC discuss report and possible actions CRNM is considering addressing progress opportunities 	October 24, 2016
CRNM Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRNM's Action Plan submitted to OMFC 	November 16, 2016
2016 Registration Review Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report submitted to CRNM Report contains the review findings, CRNM's Action Plan, and the Fairness Commissioner's Compliance Statement 	November 29, 2016
Registration Review Closeout Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRNM and Fairness Commissioner discuss Registration Review Report, potential OMFC support for actions & how CRNM's action plan will inform the relationship moving forward 	December 15, 2016
Report Release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration Review Report submitted to Minister of Education and Training, the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living and uploaded on OMFC website 	

CRNM Review participants:

Katherine Stansfield, Executive Director

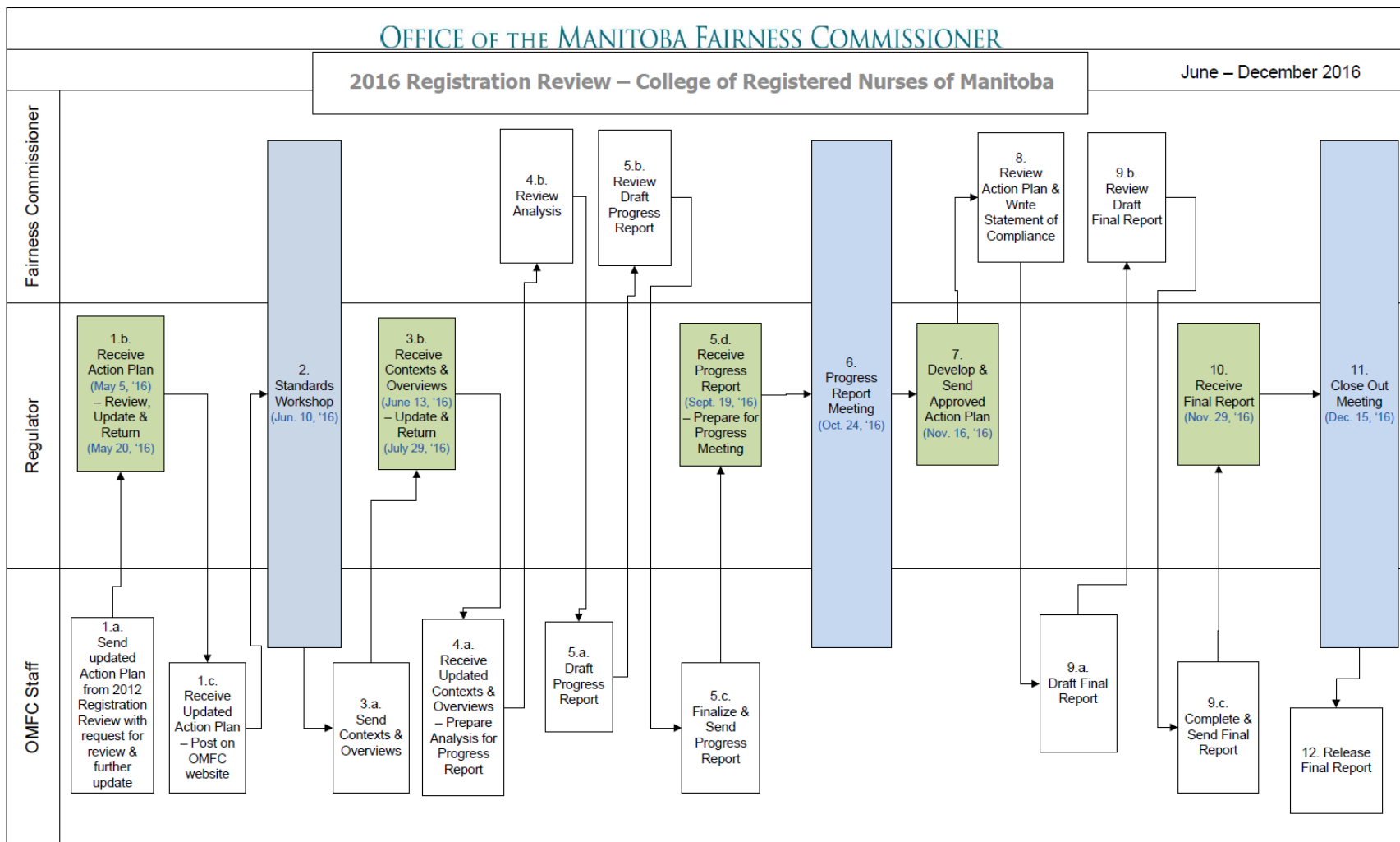
Leanne Matthes, Senior Consultant, Governance and Strategic Initiatives

Suzanne Wowchuk, Director of Registration and Professional Conduct

OFFICE OF THE MANITOBA FAIRNESS COMMISSIONER

2016 Registration Review – College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba

June – December 2016





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